

September/ October 2024

The specialist international magazine for theme parks and FECs

InterPark

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Open to Question
Philip Hernandez
Haunted Attraction

Feature
Family Rides - The
Economic Advantages

Project Profile
Cloud Shuttle
Vekoma

MACK RIDES PRESENTS

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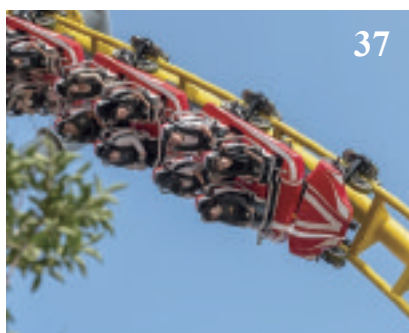
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water
park
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Interactive water action now is available for water parks - the Twist 'n' Splash features a water battle that is perfect for all ages. The free floating barrels pass by the many water cannons surrounding the ride and everyone is becoming part of the action. Learn more about Tonnevirvel and other attractions of Mack Rides at www.mack-rides.com



Welcome to the autumn issue of InterPark magazine

Where we take a closer look at the family rides sector for our main feature. With family rides estimated to account for 30 - 40% of a park's overall revenue, InterPark's feature writer Emma Bilardi spoke to some of the leading suppliers in the sector to talk trends, new offerings and the economic advantages of family rides. Turn to page 24 to read the full article.

Now, as it is 'fright season' we thought we would take the opportunity to put Haunted Attraction Network's Philip Hernandez in the hot seat for Open to Question this issue. Now considered the leading news resource for the haunted attractions industry, Hernandez started the network over a decade ago, turn to page 40 to discover what it is about the sector that he loves so much, which attractions he misses the most, and what he's looking forward to seeing at IAAPA in November.

This issue's Project Profile focuses on Vekoma's latest offering at Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland, in China. The Cloud Shuttle multi-launch roller coaster is a world first and its cutting-edge technology features a triple LSM launch through station plus two LSM boosts. There is a forwards LSM launch max of 40km/h (25mph), a backwards LSM launch max of 76km/h (47mph), a 45-metre (128ft) vertical free fall with three seconds of zero gravity. Its final launch hurtles riders on a forward LSM launch towards 95km/h (59mph). Read news editor, David Whitworth's full report on page 38.

B Whitaker

Beth Whitaker Editor

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Europe News

The latest news and announcements

1 Gold Rush gives variety thrills at Drayton Manor



One of the most anticipated coasters in the UK has opened, as the newly crowned UK's longest family coaster made its debut at Drayton Manor Resort thanks to the creation of Gold Rush.

The roller coaster is an apt addition to Frontier Falls. Created by Intamin, this Lift & Launch roller coaster evokes a mine themed adventure filled with cutting-edge multiple settings and ride scenarios - a duo of different launches means no two journeys are the same along this 2-minute shootout. Gold Rush also comes with a custom soundtrack to heighten sensations.

Gold Rush at Drayton Manor Resort offers a dynamic ride, which will 'take you on a wild adventure through the history of the gold mining era,' according to the experienced manufacturer.

In one of the two ride sequences, guests will experience the lift hill both in the classic forward way but will, after a separate backwards friction wheel launch section, reverse the backside of the lift hill, stall, and launch forwards back down the lift hill again.

Afterwards, a dynamic friction wheel launch will then propel guests through close-to-ground manoeuvres along the rest of the exciting layout. The layout includes many 'low-to-the-ground elements that create a surprising and dynamic ride experience for the whole family.'

Gold Rush features Intamin's single-backbone track which ensures a smooth ride experience and offers an aesthetically pleasing design, requiring fewer columns compared to the traditional two-pipe track systems.

The trains feature comfortable seats, individual lap bars, and customised theming to perfectly fit the story you want to tell, explain Intamin. Combined with a one-metre minimum height requirement, these trains are a perfect fit for the entire family.

"On 26 July, 2024, Intamin's esteemed partner Drayton

Manor opened its new ride Gold Rush, one of the most innovative family coasters in Europe, to the public," commented Intamin at the launch. "Gold Rush is Europe, and Intamin's, first family coaster featuring both a lift and a launch in the same ride as well as a multi-experience layout configuration.

"The Intamin team is proud to be part of this project would like to extend its gratitude to its long-standing partners Drayton Manor and Looping Group, for placing their trust in us."

And in a fond nod to history, Drayton Manor Resort has acknowledged the past by creating a tombstone emblazoned with Apocalypse where the queue line is and shows where the popular drop tower ride once lay.

Drayton Manor Resort has high hopes for its new variety coaster and looks to have struck gold.

2 Energylandia celebrates a decade of delights

Poland's largest amusement park Energylandia celebrated its 10th anniversary on 14 July with a fun-fest event of decorations, spectacular fireworks and of course, roller coaster riding.

The park continues to grow year on year; last year Energylandia broke a new attendance record, having welcomed 1.8 million guests during the previous season. Now celebrating its 190th anniversary, the popular park continues to grow and draws visitors from all over the world with its huge range of entertaining attractions.

Energylandia is situated in the town of Zator, 50km from Krakow. The park hosts award-winning roller coasters and themed water parks.



The Polish park is home to 17 thrilling roller coasters, one of which is the Hyperion, awarded the title of European Top New Attraction by Parksmania in 2018. With speeds of over 140km and a drop of over 80m, the Hyperion is the longest, fastest and tallest coaster in Europe. It is situated in the Extreme Zone, designed especially for thrill seekers.

With six zones containing over 120 attractions, and an established outdoor water park, Energylandia currently covers 70 hectares. However, with access to over 200 hectares available for further development, the park has the potential of doubling in size in the future.

Europe News

The latest news and announcements

3 PortAventura launches 'Duelins'



PortAventura has released its new free mobile game Duelins as the Spanish resort makes a new commitment to the world of mobile games by creating its first game and own IP.

Duelins is an online multiplayer game in which up to 10 people can participate at the same time. Each game consists of an epic battle between two families, the Atmos and the Drax, to see who can get hold of the Lumit, a magical and powerful gem hidden in the park. These families constitute the resort's first own IP with 10 exclusive characters.

To develop the game, the company collaborated with PlayStark, a leading Spanish company in game

development. In order to participate in the thrilling fight between characters, it is necessary to be in the park, download the game and enter the code provided on the screens located in the waiting areas of the aforementioned attractions. Once inside the park, the player has to throw themselves against other characters to reduce their life. Each game is unique as each character has special abilities that can change the course of the game; some do more damage at the end of the turn, others restore lives, and some go even further. In addition, the player finds distinctive elements depending on the attraction and can thus enjoy a different experience in the same game. After each game, you enter a ranking of the best players of the day.

This Duelins game represents a step further in the company's innovation strategy with the main objective of Duelins being "the enhancement of the customer experience at the resort, by implementing improvements that enrich their visit," emphasised Andreu Tobella, Digital Director at PortAventura World. "We see a promising future and immense potential in the integration of physical experiences with innovative digital interactions. With this approach, we are committed to continuing to offer new and creative ways for our visitors to enjoy unforgettable experiences. We look forward to a positive reception and hope that Duelins can continue to enhance our visitors' experience."

With the development of this new technology, PortAventura World enables itself to connect with new generations, especially those interested in digital environments, who will find not only entertainment in this app, but also an opportunity to interact with other visitors. The mobile game can be downloaded from the Apple Store and Google Play, and is available in Spanish, Catalan and English language.



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Europe News

The latest news and announcements



4 Zoomarine opens The Iguazu

Zoomarine theme park, located on the Algarve, Portugal has opened a new thrill water roller coaster.

Inspired by the spectacular Iguazu Falls, Zoomarine has given life to a log flume style ride called The Iguazu. The water roller coaster features canoes designed in the shape of a log, which invite adventurers to embark on a 343-metre (1125ft) route. The journey onboard The Iguazu includes three major climbs of five, six and 11-metres (16ft, 20ft, 23ft), planned to ensure that each descent is more exciting than the last. Guests will enjoy exciting flumes, descents and thrilling curves with the course culminating in a spectacular simulation of the falls, covering visitors in a refreshing mist.

Sofia Bach, Communication & PR for Zoomarine Algarve, spoke exclusively to InterPark about this latest ride creation.

Can you describe how you felt at the opening of The Iguazu?

“The Iguazu opening was highly anticipated as this is an attraction that was already due to take part in Zoomarine amusement offer, catering to visitors with an adrenaline-seeker profile. It complements the rest of the park's offer as this is a first of its kind at Zoomarine. Additionally, the size, and complexity of the project required a very skilled group of people to make sure

every single aspect of the project ran smoothly.

We were excited to be able to offer an attraction that promised to be the highlight of the summer in the Algarve. This project is part of the plan to expand the park's water area and was inspired by the majestic falls of the Iguazu Falls.”

How did the idea of a log flume style attraction originate?

“At Zoomarine Portugal, everything we do and create is aimed at delivering the best experience to our visitors, increasing satisfaction, exceeding expectations and, above all, providing unique and unforgettable moments of contact and respect for nature. Additionally, we added what is best in regard to family fun and educational entertainment.

Our theme park expansion projects are 99% defined and budgeted for, but it's up to our visitors to make up the remaining 1% - it's them who tell us each year which way to go, based on the thousands of satisfaction questionnaires we carry out each season. In other words, the attractions that have been inaugurated over the last 10 years are a response to the requests and needs of our annual visitors, who vote by a majority on the type of new attraction for the coming season. So, the idea was already here, we just had to find the exact moment when it would match and surprise our visitors.”

Which constructor manufactured the ride and how was it working with them?

“The equipment was built by the SBF - Visa Rides group. Although it was the first time we had worked with this group and the communication channels were still being developed, they were always very professional and committed to meeting the deadlines we set.”

What was the biggest challenge of the project?

“The biggest challenges were the size and complexity of the equipment and the tight deadlines for completing a project of this size. A combined effort between Zoomarine's team and the SBF-Visa Rides group allowed that all the challenges met were successfully overcome.”





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Europe News

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What can guests expect from a day out at Zoomarine theme park?

“A visit to Zoomarine Algarve is a full fun family day combining entertainment and education. The park offers different zoological presentations including dolphins, seals and sealions, tropical birds, birds of prey, a musical show, a pirate show, several immersive habitats, such as a butterfly garden, or a tropical forest. There is also a large offer of mechanical amusements and a growing water park area with several water slides, pools and a wave beach. The park mission is to promote knowledge, preservation and environmental education in a fun and passionate way.”

In addition to The Iguaçu, the zoological and mechanical offerings, the wave beach, swimming pools and presentations that run throughout the season, the park has more water entertainment in operation until 30 September, including the Rio dos Côcos, Quetzal and the Fantasy Islands and the Treasury. Guests can enjoy a ride on Zoomarine’s new water attraction until 30 November when the park closes for the winter.

5 Porsche Museum unveils Escapegame

Porsche Museum is the latest entertainment venue to get the wheels in motion by creating its own Escape Room style game.

The objective of the escape game at the Porsche Museum is to defend the cultural and technical heritage of the sports car brand. Participants will race against

the clock in order to solve a variety of puzzles as you lead towards the grand finale. This classic scavenger hunt enables you to discover the history of the sports car manufacturer in a fun way, but also find out more about the museum building itself.

“The escape game offers regular visitors and first-timers alike the opportunity to explore the museum and the Porsche brand from a different angle,” says Franziska Volle, responsible for the escape game at Porsche Museum. “Taking part in the Porsche escape game is a great bonding exercise and the experience stays with you long in the memory. At the end of the game, a mysterious puzzle cube awaits participants.”

The missions of the escape game highlight the importance of creative thinking and teamwork. Participants have to conduct research with invisible ink, work together in a decoding puzzle and perform a skill challenge- all housed over three floors in the Porsche Museum.

A pilot challenge that sets the overall story narrative awaits the teams, which is followed by new missions every year. In the lead role are the Porsche Heritage Guardians, dedicated to the preservation of Porsche’s brand heritage. A hidden trail in the museum challenges those who prove themselves worthy of becoming ‘the next generation of Guardians.’ Players are tested then rewarded with an exclusive badge.

The escape game is geared up for groups of between two to five people and is available to play in German and English languages. There is a duration of 90 minutes to complete challenges with the aid of a tablet computer. Players collect a rucksack at the front desk in the foyer before embarking on their journey to find the physical tools needed to solve the puzzles. A chatbot function guides the participants through the game on the tablet. AR applications and digital resources help to solve the puzzles.

It all builds up to the finale: the ‘Escape Cube’ linked to a secret code. The aim is to set the four combination wheels correctly, one for each theme: Passion, pioneering spirit, performance and design. This demonstrates the categories successfully undertaken of ‘overtaking’, ‘strong intuition’, ‘upside down’ and ‘angular aesthetics’, leading to be acknowledged as ‘Porsche Heritage Guardians.’



America News

The latest news and announcements

1 Rapterra to conquer the skies at Kings Dominion



Kings Dominion has unveiled Rapterra to the roller coaster world - becoming the world's tallest and longest launched wing coaster.

"Conquer the skies" is how Kings Dominion explains the mantra of Rapterra. Scheduled for 2025, Rapterra, crafted by Bolliger & Mabillard, simulates the flight of the legendary Jungle Hawk with an intense initial launch, plunging dives, twisting manoeuvres and sweeping turns.

Kings Dominion explains that the intense launch thrusts you skywards to soar 145ft (44-metres) above the jungle floor. Riders then plunge downward into a steep dive, gaining speed before pitching upwards again into a tight dive loop - the first of three stomach-churning inversions. And much like a Jungle Hawk, riders weave through the air, gracefully shifting from side to side and changing direction and altitude as they please. After soaring high above the midway for a second time, riders sweep sideways as they drop down to the ground. Riders flip head-over-heels spinning through the corkscrew, 'crest a peak' with a momentary sense of weightlessness and quickly swoop into a 360° raptor roll before landing.

Rapterra features three exciting inversions: dive loop, flat spin corkscrew and 360° raptor roll. Its length of track covers 3,086ft (944-metres) and lasts for 89 seconds. There are two trains with 20 passengers per train.

Unlike traditional roller coasters that start with an uphill climb, Rapterra uses electromagnetic propulsion to blast you straight out of the station, accelerating from zero to 65mph (105km/h) in just four seconds - akin to a Jungle Hawk when it mounts an attack on its prey.

As well as being a thrilling ride experience, Rapterra also comes with an immersive backstory in which Kings

Dominion describes in detail: "Centuries ago, ancient leaders built a shrine to honour the mighty Jungle Hawk. People who entered the shrine became spiritually linked to - and temporarily possessed - the powers and abilities of the bird of prey.

"Building the temple at the base of a volcano, Mt. Inferna proved unfortunate. The ground surrounding the magma chamber collapsed, burying the Jungle Hawk temple under mounds of volcanic rock. The temple seemingly vanished from the earth.

"Archaeologists recently discovered the volcanic site and unearthed the remains of the Jungle Hawk shrine. The bird's ferocious spirit remains at the site, launching brave riders to exhilarating new heights. Rapterra: The world's tallest and longest-launched wing coaster."

2 Canyon Ski Resort unveils aerial park

Canyon Ski Resort in Alberta, Canada, has unveiled its new Canyon aerial park set across three skill levels, from beginner to intermediate to advanced.

A 40ft (12-metre) steel structure features 36 exciting obstacles to provide guests with fun challenges.

"Whether you're a seasoned thrill-seeker or embarking on your first adventure, Canyon Aerial Park promises an unforgettable experience," states Canyon Ski Resort. "Join us to conquer heights, test your skills, and create lasting memories in a breathtaking outdoor setting."

At Canyon Aerial Park, guests start with ground-level training to begin feeling comfortable with the safety mechanisms, before progressing their way up the course. Included in the ticket is the Dual Headrush Free Fall Jump, which is a 40ft (12-metre) leap with three metres of free fall, as well as three rock climbing belays that cater for all abilities.

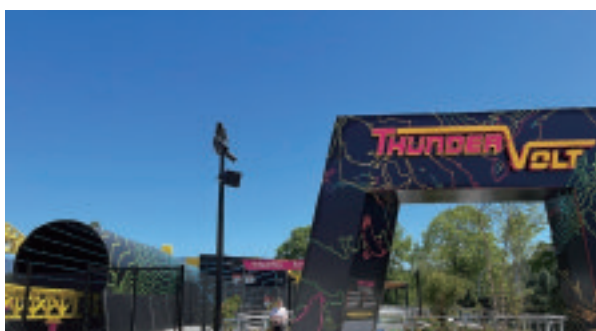
The park will also be opening a double zipline that will span almost 1,000ft (305-metres).



America News

The latest news and announcements

3 Vancouver's Playland launches ThunderVolt



Canada's fastest electric launch coaster ThunderVolt has opened at Playland, Vancouver. The \$18m attraction has been constructed by Italy's Zamperla.

The roller coaster takes 12 passengers on an electric charged journey - propelling riders with 1.3Gs of acceleration into an illuminated tunnel before going up a steep incline and then down an 18-metre (59ft) drop.

Upon its grand opening, Shelley Frost, president of Playland, commented: "It sets Playland up to thrill many more generations of British Columbians and guests from across Canada and around the world, making it a jewel in the crown of our organisation.

"We are extremely happy to be opening this state-of-the-art Zamperla designed launch coaster at Playland. Positioned next to our historic Playland wooden coaster, the Thundervolt represents a significant investment into the future of our park."

ThunderVolt launches from a stop to full speed in a matter of seconds. The sequence begins with a specially designed tunnel lined with LED lighting and then flies up into a hill. After the airtime hill the coaster flies through a gigantic figure-eight helix.

"This is an extremely exciting day for our company," said Antonio Zamperla, CEO of Zamperla Group. "ThunderVolt uses our new lightning trains, and they represent the next generation of roller coaster design. They are light, have a low maintenance cost and are extremely comfortable. A decade's worth of research was put into creating these fantastic coaster vehicles."

The installation has redefined the northeast corner of the park as ThunderVolt stands next to the future site of the new PNE Amphitheatre, which will debut in 2026.

"The new launch coaster complements the rest of the park extremely well," said North American Sales Manager Michael Coleman. "The park had a classic wooden roller coaster and now a next generation launch coaster. Playland truly offers something for every type of thrill seeker."



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Asia News

The latest news and announcements

1 World's first audio museum opens in Seoul



The world's first dedicated audio museum has opened in Seoul, South Korea.

The Audeum Audio Museum is the brainchild of Michael Chung, founder of Korean audio specialist Silbatone Acoustics, in memory of his late father.

Audeum is the first public museum dedicated solely to audio equipment. The museum has an eye-catching entrance that resembles hundreds of organ pipes and natural rock formations.

Audeum covers seven stories spanning 224,246sqm of exhibition space. Built by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, Audeum has an array of audio equipment and cameras. The museum features a variety of acoustically engineered spaces for exhibiting the museum's world-class collection of sound reproduction equipment from the 19th century to the present day.

"With a focus on preservation and research, Audeum strives to expand and redefine the conventional listening experience by connecting historical sound reproduction technology with the broader world of art," says the museum.

An exhibition called 'Jung Eum': In Search of Sound, celebrates the creation of high-fidelity or 'Hi-Fi' sound. Among the items on show are the 16-A and 16-B Sound Systems by Western Electric, which were used in small theatres in 1932, and the Lansing Iconic loudspeaker from 1937 - the loudspeaker that started an evolution of home audio technology. Western Electric's 12-A and 13-A Sound Systems are displayed which are the world's first large cinema sound system.

2 Legoland Malaysia Resort targeting Indian visitor market

Legoland Malaysia Resort, located in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Indian online travel company MakeMyTrip. The partnership aims to attract more Indian tourists by offering 'a unique blend of exciting Lego adventures and rich Malaysian cultural experiences.

MakeMyTrip will create packages with special offers and experiences, aimed at enhancing accessibility and the overall experience for Indian tourists at the resort. "MakeMyTrip will offer exclusive deals and unique experiences to make Legoland Malaysia Resort more accessible," said Jasmeet Singh MakeMyTrip Holidays & Experiences chief commercial officer. "This partnership highlights our commitment to enriching the travel experience for Indian travellers with unique and customised packages. By collaborating, we ensure that Indian tourists will fully enjoy the diverse offerings of Legoland Malaysia Resort. Our combined efforts will make every trip to the resort a memorable adventure."

This announcement builds upon forging stronger ties between the two following Malaysia's visa-free status for Indian travellers until 31 December 2024. It is important to highlight that India, which is ranked fifth as the largest source of visitors, is a key tourist market for Malaysia.

With a growing interest among Indians in international travel, this collaboration has strong foundations for success. This is highlighted by the fact that the nation's tourism industry in general is on the rise; Legoland Malaysia Resort is aiming to take advantage and drive tourism growth through collaboration coupled with immersive cultural experiences, new attractions and edutainment.

Legoland Malaysia Resort sales and marketing director Thila Munusamy, spoke of the new partnership: "Legoland Malaysia Resort is the ultimate family holiday destination. Our combination of world-



class Lego attractions, educational workshops, and exciting seasonal events offers families an unforgettable edutainment experience that sparks children's creativity and leaves lasting memories. We look forward to a successful partnership with MakeMyTrip to make our adventures more accessible to more Indian travellers, offering a one-of-a-kind Malaysian experience."



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Asia News

The latest news and announcements

Legoland Resort also includes the Legoland Hotel with various themed rooms along with a range of dining options comprising Bricks Family Restaurant, Di Mattoni, Kai's Sushi Bar, and Coffee @ Bricks as well as Legoland Malaysia. The resort serves as a catalyst for tourism growth in Johor and serves with a duty to serve the extended region too, as Legoland Malaysia Divisional Director, CS Lim, points out: "Our focus on unique cultural experiences and family-friendly entertainment aligns perfectly with The Tourism, Arts, and Culture Ministry's (MOTAC) vision, making us a magnet for international and domestic travellers."

Legoland Malaysia collaborates with MOTAC to promote Malaysia as a premier family tourism destination, as Lim explained: "This collaboration includes joint marketing initiatives, participation in travel trade shows and the development of culturally themed events."

Meanwhile, Thila Munusamy added that the resort offers vibrant cultural celebrations like Lunar New Year and Hari Raya, created with Lego bricks, attracting visitors with specific cultural interests. "The park keeps things exciting with new and exciting offerings, such as the master model builder search, brick fest featuring creative stories and building experiences and the highly anticipated Lego Friends 4D movie. These initiatives not only create fresh appeal but also encourage repeat visits."

These activities aim to entice families, ultimately boosting local tourism spending. Legoland Malaysia not only builds memories with bricks but also commits to enriching families and driving economic growth."

3 South Korean investors set sights on \$2bn entertainment complex

South Korean investors have targeted Vietnam's Quang Ninh province in becoming Asia's largest sports and entertainment complex.

With an expected investment in the entertainment venue of \$2bn, Vietnam is set to be transformed into a tourist mecca.

A meeting between Quang Ninh People's Committee and the Korean Greyhound Association (KGA) took place on 18 July, whereby the association proposed to invest and construct a billion-dollar international sports

and entertainment complex in the northern province.

KGA chairman Park Gi-Beom expressed, "it is exploring investment opportunities in the area."

An image of Cao Tuong Huy, Chairman of Quang Ninh People's Committee, welcoming the Korean Greyhound Association's representatives and investors from South Korea was released, demonstrating the validity of the partnership.

Details revealed from the meeting state the KGA is proposing to construct the Halong International Sports and Entertainment complex. It will cover 350ha (885ac) in the northern area of Halong. The complex would include an amusement park, entertainment facilities, tourist attractions, commercial services and competition venues. The project would also cater for tourism and sports facilities such as hotels, a water park, ice skating rink and ice hockey rink.

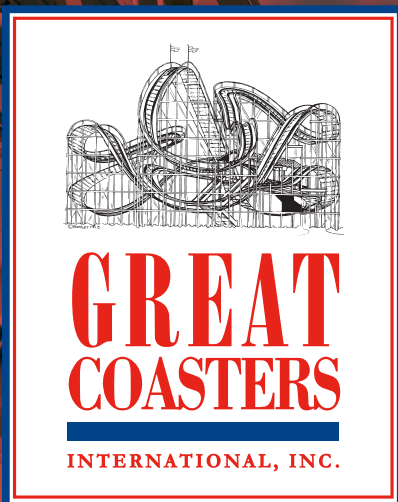


According to Park Gi-Beom, this project would be the largest sports and entertainment complex in Asia. "KGA hopes that Quang Ninh province will facilitate the procedures for research and development of investment ideas, creating new and attractive tourism products and services."

Meanwhile, Cao Tuong Huy, Chairman of Quang Ninh People's Committee added: "Although it is a service and tourism province, Quang Ninh still lacks attractive, high-quality entertainment and tourism products. Therefore, investing in a sports and entertainment complex is a feasible idea - aligning with the orientation and goals of transforming the development model, increasing the proportion of the service-tourism economic sector and moving up to a higher segment in the province's economic value chain."

Currently, Quang Ninh has been an epicentre for attracting investment firms from many international corporations. The province has nearly 200 foreign-invested enterprises from 20 countries and territories, which amounts to around \$15bn.

The significant investment ploughing into Vietnam's Quang Ninh province is another example of the KGA flexing their financial muscle and diversifying its portfolio of activities in the province. The association has vast experience in investing, developing and providing distinctive sports tourism services and activities in South Korea on top of several other countries across the world.



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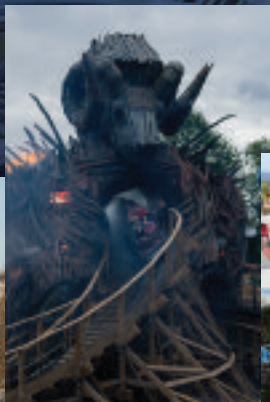
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China News

The latest news and announcements

1 OCT Happy Valley Beijing expands Playa Maya Water Park



OCT Happy Valley Beijing celebrated the grand opening of its expansion at Playa Maya water park on 15 June.

This expansion showcases six innovative water ride complexes designed and manufactured exclusively by ProSlide. The newly opened section of Playa Maya is set to thrill visitors with a range of ProSlide attractions, including MammothBLAST water coaster with FlyingSAUCER 45s - an iconic ride enjoyed worldwide for its high-energy twists and turns. TORNADO 60 and Double TornadoWAVE 60 complex are two exciting water rides that promise unique, unforgettable experiences that guests have not experienced at the park before. ProRACER challenges friends and family to a race down thrilling slides. FreeFALL with SkyBOX is a heart-pounding attraction designed for thrill seekers and adrenaline junkies. TurboTWISTER is a fresh and exciting take on the classic water slide. RideHOUSE 600 is an interactive water play area suitable for guests of all ages.

This project highlights the strongly forged relationship between ProSlide and OCT Group, a collaboration that has spanned over a decade. ProSlide has contributed to many OCT water park projects across China, including OCT Xi'an, OCT Nanjing, OCT Chongqing Water Theme Park, OCT Playa Maya Waterpark, and OCT Xiangyang. The continued partnership showcases ProSlide's understanding of OCT Group's vision and the unique needs of the Chinese market.

Chuanhao Cheng, chief operating officer – Asia at ProSlide, emphasised the significance of this project: "The expansion of Playa Maya at OCT Happy Valley Beijing exemplifies our commitment to delivering world-

class water attractions that resonate with park-goers. Our ongoing collaboration with OCT Group allows us to continually innovate and provide thrilling, memorable experiences for visitors. The official opening of the water park expansion marks the beginning of a new era of excitement and fun at OCT Happy Valley Beijing."

To gauge further reaction, InterPark exclusively spoke with Jacky Gu, ProSlide Business Development Manager in Shanghai.

What innovations can riders expect?

"OCT has had its own theme park in Beijing for nearly eight years. Its Playa Maya Water Park is placed in the middle of the theme park and is its first concept of a park within a park. ProSlide was proud to collaborate on its expansion of Playa Maya with a selection of exciting new rides aiming at thrilling guests."

How did the expansion project at Playa Maya water park come about?

"We have done a lot of successful water parks with OCT. During the past decade, we earned their trust and respect with our professionalism, quality design and material, and customer service. When they initially planned their expansion, ProSlide was top of their mind as their qualified supplier. We then started to work with the OCT team to share our insights and hear their desires and requirements. The result is a truly exciting expansion!"

How long did the project take?

"We spent more than one year working with the client on the initial concept plan. Both ProSlide and OCT aim to build only the highest quality water parks, so we took the time required to design and build only the best and highest quality. Altogether, the project took approximately 18 months."

2 Chinese government implements Smart Tourism Action Plan



The Chinese government recently unveiled its 'Action Plan for the Innovative Development of Smart Tourism,' aimed at promoting more immersive and personalised experiences for tourists by using new technologies - a plan dedicated to integrating the culture and tourism industry into China's digital economy.

COMPACT SPINNING FAMILY COASTER

UNIQUE FEATURES

LED RGB ON CARS
AND UNDER TRACK
WITH SPECIAL
RAIL STRUCTURE

8 CARS WITH
4 SEATS

INDIVIDUAL
SPINNING CARS

**FREE
ROTATION**
OF THE CARS



FOOTPRINT: 42.2 x 20.2 x 16.4 m
HEIGHT OF TRACK WITH CARS: 13 m approx.
WEIGHT: 100 Tons approx.

STANDARD: EN 13814 - 2019
PARK AND FUNFAIR AVAILABILITY

VIDEO



NEW DESIGN
WITH UNIQUE DYNAMIC LIGHT EFFECTS

China News

The latest news and announcements

In May, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the National Data Bureau held a meeting to organise the plan, which outlines eight specific tasks to aid smart tourism. The Action Plan will look to big data, artificial intelligence, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) as a driver for further success for its tourism industry.

The goal is by 2027, the level of smart tourism will have exponentially grown to provide a more sophisticated smart tourism infrastructure with smart tourism services and experiences becoming more convenient.

Wang Heyun, of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, emphasised the importance of the smart tourism ethos: “On the one hand, digital technology has innovated the combination of culture and tourism, enriching the content of tourism products. On the other, smart tourism makes travelling easier and enhances visitors' experiences, catering to the diversified needs of tourists.”

A case in point of this smart tourism revolution is The Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu province, home to

one of China's most important Buddhist art displays and which opened its VR experience centre in September to provide an immersive and interactive experience. The VR experience has become very popular as it allows visitors to explore a cave that is rarely open to the public for preservation reasons. However, by using VR, visitors can closely view the murals within the cave and interact with the figures depicted in the murals by using VR and AR technology.

According to the National Smart Tourism Development Report 2023 released by the China Tourism Research Institute, more than 80% of visitors surveyed said they were willing to spend more money to experience travel blended with technology. Furthermore, more than half of the people said they hoped to experience better tourism services with smart technology.

Dai Bin, director of the China Tourism Research Institute, said that big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies have helped reduce the amount of time tourists spend planning their travels, yet there is much more that can be done to improve the tourist experience: “Technological services have not yet fully met the rising demands for high-quality travel experiences. Therefore, intelligence has become a new trend in the tourism industry.”

Therefore, The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has acted through commissioning 30 smart tourism immersive experience venues allied to its Action Plan. This figure will increase to 42 this year, implemented in museums, libraries, scenic areas, historical sites and other traditional cultural and tourist attractions.

The Action Plan will cater for offline services too with manual service counters for ticketing and other services to suit the elder generation and special groups.





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Middle East News

The latest news and announcements

1 Tourism transformation in Qatar continues



Qatar continues to grow at a staggering rate through a host of tourism developments.

The emit has unveiled another grand tourism plan in the shape of a new amusement park called the Simaisma Project.

Qatar is investing heavily in the infrastructure of the new amusement park and tourism amenities, to the tune of \$5.5bn. Qatar's new initiative, the Simaisma Project, will cover 3sqm of beachfront land with its centrepiece, a large amusement park estimated to be larger than Disney's Magic Kingdom.

The Simaisma Project stems from the Qatar's Ministry of Municipality waterfront real estate, that stretches over Qatar's eastern coastline along Simaisma Beach on the country's east coast. The location of the amusement park will be to the north of the capital, Doha. The amusement park will spread across 8-million sqm (1,976 acres) and run along seven kilometres of beachfront land. The lavish Simaisma Project will feature an amusement park divided into four unique zones as well as 16 hotels and resorts, which are primed for private development, ensuring vast opportunities for investment in Qatar's tourism infrastructure. In addition, there will be an 18-hole championship golf course surrounded by 300 luxury villas, a state-of-the-art yacht marina and an array of high-end restaurants, retail outlets and beach clubs.

With the environment in mind, the Simaisma Project will harness eco-friendly, locally sourced materials - measures which are in line with Qatar's commitment to sustainable development practices.

News of the ambitious project was revealed at an event held in the Sheraton Hotel in Doha as dignitaries from both the public and private sectors joined together to unveil the grand plans. Speaking at the launch, HE

Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah Al Attiyah, Qatar Minister of Municipality, stated the importance of the country's latest project: "As we move steadily towards achieving Qatar National Vision 2030, we are building a more prosperous and stable situation for future generations, economically, socially and environmentally. We are thrilled to contribute to the growth of the tourism and entertainment sector by spearheading innovative projects that meet the rising demand in this crucial industry."

The Simaisma Project is overseen by Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company, which will lead the development of this entertainment district. Qatari Diar oversees 50 projects in development across 20 countries with an overall investment value of around \$35bn. Eng Ali bin Mohamed Al-Ali, CEO of Qatari Diar, spoke of "redefining tourism in the region" referring to the fact "we have meticulously planned this project under the guidance of the Ministry of Municipality and in alignment with Qatar's trajectory of continuous economic growth. This project will establish new benchmarks for tourism in the region and write a new, remarkable chapter in Qatar's success story." The event was also attended by Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, HE Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani.

The year-on-year growth is moving the needle for the Qatari real estate sector, currently valued at approximately \$485bn. The region has become a focal point for foreign direct investment, second only to the energy sector. Furthermore, a huge surge in demand for residential and commercial properties has stemmed from Qatar's significant tourism growth through hosting major events, and the expansion of business and commerce. For those reasons, the Simaisma tourism project aligns with Qatar's National Development Strategy 2024-2030, unveiled earlier this year, which aims to increase the economy beyond its traditional reliance on fossil fuels and pursue greater foreign direct investment. Therefore, the Simaisma Project represents a significant milestone towards achieving these ambitious goals, leading to tourism diversification.



A prosperous and sustainable future for Qatar is underpinned by redefining the essence of smart and sustainable cities. And the Simaisma Project promises to live up to those expectations to ensure the lavish district becomes the jewel in the Qatari crown.

Middle East News

The latest news and announcements

2 Revolutionising Entertainment: Triotech's Into The Deep Innovative Dark Ride at Six Flags Qiddiya

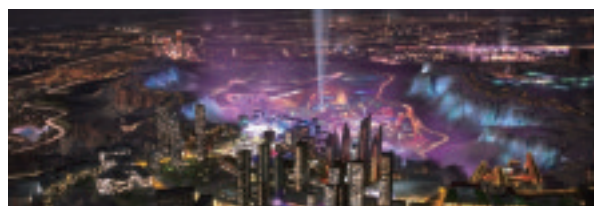


Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a bold initiative aimed at transforming the nation's economy and global standing through diversification and innovation. A central pillar of this vision is the Qiddiya project, an ambitious entertainment destination located just outside Riyadh. Qiddiya is set to become a world-class entertainment hub, featuring a diverse array of attractions that cater to arts, culture, sports, and wellness. Among its most anticipated developments is Six Flags Qiddiya City, a theme park that promises to push the boundaries of amusement and set new standards in the global entertainment industry. A key highlight of this park is Triotech's groundbreaking dark ride, Into The Deep, an attraction poised to redefine the theme park experience.

Six Flags Qiddiya: Pioneering a New Era of Entertainment

Six Flags Qiddiya City is set to become a cornerstone of Qiddiya, occupying a sprawling 320,000sqm. The park will feature 28 rides and attractions, 10 of which are designed for thrill-seekers, while the remaining 18 cater to families and young children. These attractions will not only offer world-class entertainment but also reflect the rich cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia, creating a unique blend of tradition and innovation.

What sets Six Flags Qiddiya apart is its commitment to breaking records. The park will host five key attractions that will set 10 world records, including the world's tallest, fastest, and longest roller coaster, Falcon's Flight, and the tallest pendulum ride, Gyrospin. These groundbreaking rides are expected to draw visitors from around the globe, making Six Flags Qiddiya a must-visit destination for thrill enthusiasts and families alike.



Triotech's Into The Deep: A Dark Ride Like No Other

Amidst these exhilarating attractions, Triotech's Into The Deep stands out as a unique and immersive experience. As a global leader in creating interactive attractions, Triotech has been entrusted with the design and installation of this exclusive dark ride, which will be located in the park's Discovery Springs land. Spanning over 2,400sqm, Into The Deep will take guests on an extraordinary underwater expedition, where they will embark on a mission to restore the beauty and wonder of marine life.

The ride promises a fully immersive experience, captivating participants of all ages. Guests will board four-player carts that offer unobstructed views, with rapid acceleration and fast rotation. This design ensures that each player is fully engaged, enhancing the sense of adventure as they navigate through nine interactive media-based scenes, complete with special effects that bring the underwater world to life. Triotech's expertise in creating captivating content is further evidenced by the fact that the media for Into The Deep is being developed in-house by their animation studio. This team is known for its ability to craft client-specific intellectual property, ensuring that the ride's narrative, characters, and visual effects are perfectly aligned with the park's overarching themes.

Triotech's Into The Deep dark ride is set to be a defining feature of Six Flags Qiddiya City, offering an experience that is unmatched in its creativity, technology, and storytelling. As Saudi Arabia continues its journey towards realizing Vision 2030, attractions like Into The Deep not only showcase the potential of the Qiddiya project but also help position the kingdom as a global leader in entertainment and innovation. With its combination of thrilling rides, cultural experiences, and cutting-edge technology, Six Flags Qiddiya City, and Triotech's contributions are set to redefine the future of entertainment.

More about Triotech

Triotech, a leader in digital interactive attractions, has a rich history of creating award-winning, immersive experiences for the entertainment and edutainment markets. With thousands of installations in 65 countries, Triotech has entertained over 985 million guests in the past 25 years. Their attractions include interactive and 4D theatres, dark rides, VR attractions, flying theatres, walk throughs, and a multitude of coin-op games. The company offers integrated turnkey solutions including content developed in its own studio in Montreal, Canada. Founded in 1999, Triotech is a privately held group with over 200 employees deployed in Canada, Europe, the USA, and Asia.

Waterparks News

The latest news and announcements

Futuroscope opens vibrant water park Aquascope



Guests heading to Futuroscope in France have a new reason to visit thanks to the opening of its new water park, Aquascope. Created in partnership with experienced Turkish water attraction manufacturer, Polin Waterparks, Aquascope is home to a variety of attractions and slides.

InterPark spoke exclusively with Sohret Pakis, Brand Ambassador of Polin Waterparks, who detailed Polin's latest creation.

What can guests expect from a visit to Aquascope?

"A thrilling and immersive experience unlike any other. They will encounter a wide variety of attractions that combine advanced technology with unique water park features, ensuring fun for all ages. Highlights include innovative water slides and cutting-edge designs that offer exhilarating rides. As well as interactive zones - areas where guests can engage with water features and digital elements. Then there are themed environments - visually stunning settings that transport visitors to different worlds. State-of-the-art safety and comfort provides modern amenities and stringent safety measures to ensure a comfortable visit. While there are family-friendly activities including attractions and areas designed for both thrill-seekers and families with young children. Overall, Aquascope promises an unforgettable day of excitement, adventure, and relaxation."

What was the investment of the build?

"A record-breaking investment of €60m was dedicated to the water park, marking Futuroscope's largest financial commitment since its inception in 1987. This substantial

investment underscores both Polin Waterparks and Futuroscope's dedication to delivering a world-class water park experience. The resources allocated were essential in incorporating advanced technology, high-quality materials, and unique attractions, ensuring that Aquascope sets a new benchmark for indoor water parks globally."

Describe the cutting-edge features at the park

"Aquascope showcases an array of cutting-edge features tailored specifically for the project.

Seamlessly integrating the Family Space Shuttle and Family Space Boat, it offers dual sliding experiences that redefine aquatic entertainment.

Designed as an indoor facility with spatial constraints in mind, Aquascope introduces slides that ingeniously originate from within the building, optimising space utilisation while maximising thrill.

Architecturally distinctive, the Aquatube and Black Hole slides elegantly descend from the rooftop into the facility, enhancing both aesthetic appeal and visitor immersion.

Harnessing our advanced production technologies such as Utexture, Natural Light Effect (NLE), and Translucent materials, Aquascope creates a visually captivating environment. Exclusive patterns within the Utexture application are meticulously crafted to enhance thematic coherence and visual allure, specifically designed for the Aquascope project.

Our innovative technologies including Slide 'n Score, Led Waterslides, and Slide 'n Roll (Sound System) elevate visitor engagement and sensory immersion, setting a new benchmark in aquatic park experiences."

What does the opening of Aquascope mean to Polin Waterparks?

"The opening of Aquascope represents a significant milestone and source of pride for Polin Waterparks. It signifies our ability to innovate and deliver world-class water park experiences that exceed expectations. It reaffirms our position as a leader in water park design and technology, showcasing our ability to create cutting-edge attractions that redefine industry standards. It also underscores our commitment to excellence in every aspect of our projects, from conceptual design and engineering to construction and guest experience.

Seeing Aquascope come to life inspires our team and fills us with pride, knowing that our creativity and dedication have contributed to creating memorable experiences for guests.

Finish the sentence, "An adventure at Aquascope..."

"...Promises an unforgettable journey through a world of innovation, excitement, and aquatic delights, where every moment is filled with thrilling experiences and cherished memories."



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Family Rides

The Economic Advantages

Family rides are estimated to account for 30-40% of a park's overall revenue. With lower operating costs and maintenance needs compared to high-intensity thrill rides, family rides are becoming increasingly economically attractive to operators.

While on the consumer side, according to Katapult's Theme Park Fans 2024 survey, the number one reason people visit theme

parks is to 'spend time with family'. With 77% of respondents in agreement, it comes as no surprise that park operators are catering more to families, with a focus on inclusive, all age rides.

InterPark's *Emma Bilardi* spoke to some of the leading suppliers in the sector to talk trends, new offerings and the economic advantages of family rides.

Bold Nation's Managing Partner Anja D'Hondt has seen an uptick in regional parks looking for more inclusive attractions that offer a higher level of social interaction.

A trend that influenced their latest offering 'The Spinfinity Coaster' is a ride that combines elements of a dark ride and a coaster.

"It features a vehicle where visitors are facing each other," explains D'Hondt. "The layout is made to be exciting and thrilling yet not too scary, so everyone can join in. Parks can choose to fit part of the coaster into a building for a dark ride area, which brings stories and IPs to life by projection and special interaction like holograms. The ride is surprising in its dynamic as vehicles can go forward or decide to go backwards. So every lap offers a different experience."

The coaster takes a sustainable approach towards energy consumption and maintenance, lowering operations and in turn costs.

Phil Wilson, Chief Development Officer of Extreme Engineering, feels that with the cost of labour increasing, there's more demand than ever for automated attractions.

"The industry demands, especially in the FEC market, are looking towards these types of attractions to support lower costs in overhead and ease of operation. These demands have made the M&S community innovate further with attractions that can almost be self operated. I think this is going to be the future for FECs and the days of harnessed attractions will ultimately have to change on how they are operated."

RDC's General Manager, Tami Dean, agrees that minimal maintenance is a big draw for operators. "After the pandemic, we found that owner/operators are seeking new ride systems that balance the thrill/fun aspect for their patrons at an affordable investment level. We understand our clients have made a substantial investment in our ride system and are seeking an

attraction with minimal maintenance, simplicity, and reliability.

"Most of our indoor owners/operators are keenly aware that space is a premium concern. They want to optimise existing floor space with a small footprint that requires only one operator in order to reduce labour cost. RDC is fortunate that our bumper car platforms have proven to deliver a profitable revenue stream. We have found that most owners report amortising RDC's ride systems within the first year."

Jos Sloesen, Director of Sales & Marketing at ETF Ride Systems, is seeing more parks embrace inclusivity.

"We recently worked on the new Cadbury Chocolate Quest ride at Cadbury World near Birmingham, UK," he says. "The ride takes budding chocolate makers on a fun, interactive journey to source the ingredients to make a Cadbury Dairy Milk bar."

"One of the most commendable aspects of Cadbury Chocolate Quest is its commitment to inclusivity. The attraction features nine ETF Multi Movers, including four standard vehicles, four equipped with foldable seats for seamless transfer from a wheelchair, and one vehicle designed to accommodate an (electric) wheelchair with a companion.

"For this vehicle, a special boarding station is available. The electric wheelchair vehicle is stationed in a separate side track, allowing for unlimited boarding and disembarking time without disrupting the flow of other vehicles on the main track. The thoughtful design ensures that guests requiring extra assistance can embark on their chocolate-filled adventure with ease. This dedication to accessibility ensures that all guests can fully enjoy the adventure without any limitations, setting a new standard for inclusivity in the theme park industry. With a capacity of 600 people per hour, the attraction ensures that guests can enjoy the adventure without long wait times, enhancing overall guest satisfaction."

Triotech

When building The Dynamic Explorer, Triotech ensured accessibility for wheelchair users, promoting inclusivity and accommodating diverse visitor needs.

This collaboration between Triotech and the Malta National Aquarium marked the beginning of a new era in edutainment experiences for the company. As discussions occurred, it became clear that Triotech's Dynamic Explorer, a media-based motion cabin simulator, was the ideal solution to the aquarium's quest for innovation. This compact and turnkey solution can be seamlessly integrated into an existing infrastructure, optimising space without the need for extensive construction.

The Deep Explorer, invites guests of all ages on an immersive and educational journey through the mysteries of the undersea world. The experience begins as groups of up to 20 visitors embark on a simulated descent into the depths of the abyss, where they are immersed in the wonders and beauty of marine life.

However, the expedition takes an unexpected turn when a giant squid emerges, disrupting the tranquillity of the exploration. This surprising encounter adds an exciting twist to the adventure, strengthening guests' bond with the captivating beauty of the ocean and leaving them mesmerised by its mysteries.

To enhance the immersive experience, the cabin is themed and equipped with advanced motion systems and special effects. These include smoke, strobe lights, trap doors, and dynamic lighting, all designed to enhance the 360° immersion into the underwater world of the nine square metre cabin. Every detail is carefully crafted to create an authentic and engaging adventure that captivates the senses and sparks the imagination for all who embark.

"This cutting-edge attraction aligns seamlessly with our mission to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation for marine life. Mark Pace, Director of Sales and Marketing at Malta National Aquarium, said.

Despite its reputation and popularity, the Malta National Aquarium recognised the need to innovate and increase its offerings to meet the evolving expectations of its visitors.



With a desire to engage visitors on a deeper level and extend their time spent at the aquarium, the management team embarked on a quest to find a new immersive experience that would complement its existing exhibits and add a new dimension to the visitor journey. Compounded by the challenge of limited space, the aquarium faced the dilemma of transforming an unused storage room, measuring just 40 metres squared, into a captivating and immersive experience for guests.

"The collaboration with Triotech has resulted in an immersive journey that goes beyond entertainment, offering our visitors an enriching experience that fosters awareness and respect for the wonders of the ocean. We are excited to provide a unique and educational adventure for our guests."

Beyond its entertainment value, the Deep Explorer has proven to be a powerful tool for enhancing the visitor journey at the Malta National Aquarium. Strategically positioned within the visitor path, the attraction extends visitor dwell time, ensuring overall satisfaction by offering a diverse range of experiences throughout the day.

Moreover, serving as an "Instagrammable" experience, the Dynamic Explorer cultivates unique and shareable moments, driving social media engagement and amplifying the aquarium's online presence through user-generated content. Triotech's Dynamic Explorer enriches the visitor journey and contributes to the sustained success and promotion of aquarium destinations worldwide.

Through its partnership with Triotech, the aquarium has not only elevated the visitor experience but also fostered a deeper appreciation for the wonders of the ocean. As visitors embark on their journey through the undersea world, they are reminded of the importance of conservation and the role that immersive entertainment can play in inspiring positive change.

Triotech attractions can be easily themed and branded. For example, the Dynamic Explorer that takes you underwater at Malta Aquarium is themed as a submarine. The exact same Triotech product is used at Liseberg in the Underlandet attraction, except that in this instance, it's a gateway to an underground world. There are endless possibilities to theme and incorporate branding that fits with the land, the story, or whatever other key element for the venue.

Intamin

A design and manufacturing company in Schaan, Liechtenstein, Intamin is best-known for designing and constructing thrill rides and roller coasters at dozens of international theme parks, amusement parks and other entertainment venues. The company has corporate offices across the world, including three in Europe, three in Asia, and two in the United States.

Intamin recently partnered with Drayton Manor (UK) to launch new ride Gold Rush, one of the most innovative family coasters in Europe, to the public. Gold Rush is Europe, and Intamin's, first family coaster featuring both a lift and a launch in the same ride as well as a multi-experience layout configuration.

The coaster offers a dynamic ride which will take guests on a wild adventure through the history of the gold mining era.



In one of the two ride sequences, guest's experience the lift hill in the classic forward way but will, after a separate backwards friction wheel launch section, reverse the backside of the lift hill, stall, and launch forwards back down the lift hill again.

Afterwards, a dynamic friction wheel launch propels guests through close-to-ground manoeuvres along the rest of the exciting layout. The layout includes many low-to-the-ground elements that create a surprising and dynamic ride experience for the whole family.

Gold Rush features Intamin's proven single-backbone track which ensures a smooth ride experience and offers an aesthetically pleasing design, requiring fewer columns compared to the traditional two-pipe track systems

Additionally, Gold Rush is designed with a unique multi-experience layout configuration, enabling it to alternate between two distinct ride sequences at the flick of a switch. This allows the park to vary the ride experience, opting (for example) for one sequence in the morning and a different one later in the day.



Gold Rush at Drayton Manor. Photo credit: Scott Bickerton

Extreme Engineering

With over 28 years experience, Extreme Engineering are the original creators of patented mobile rock climbing walls and Auto-belay systems.

Globally recognised as the primary supplier in family-friendly attractions such as the Cloud Coaster roller coaster, High-Action Adventure parks, ziplines, Extreme Air launchers, climbing walls and other theme park attractions.

Extreme Engineering is an engineering design and fabrication firm, offering design solutions in several industries such as aviation, amusement, transportation, farming and green energy.

The company's recent projects have been varied and include the cloud coaster located at Wilderness at the Smokies in Tennessee, an exclusive drop tower attraction, called Twist Tower, for several Urban Air Adventure parks in the US, a playscape for Royal Caribbean and an improvement to a zipline attraction in Abu Dhabi.

Wilderness at the Smokies is Extreme Engineering's eighth installation and the very first for the state of Tennessee. This Cloud Coaster is also the first family coaster that soars guests through various rooms of an adventure park, interacting with other attractions. The indoor suspended coaster, called 'Rocky Top Glider' has a track length of approximately 400 linear feet with two lift hills, soaring riders high in the sky. A raised platform launches riders at a starting height of 18ft with maximum heights of approximately 25ft in the air. The overall layout of the Cloud Coaster allows the operator to achieve moderate to quick cycle times, allowing many riders per hour.

"The feedback gained on all the attractions has been incredibly positive," Wilson says. "These attractions have improved our customers per cap spending, including experiences you can't find anywhere else. For instance, The Cloud Coaster for Wilderness at the Smokies is an anchor attraction that propels guests through various rooms and above other attractions below, such as a laser tag room, bowling alleys and a ropes course. It is the most unique installation to date."



Twist Tower



WS4



GeoWallArcade



Cloud Coaster

ETF Ride Systems



SpongeBob's Crazy Carnival Ride ETF Mystic Mover credit Sally Dark Rides

A world leader in trackless rides, ETF offers customised vehicles for many budgets, providing unique experiences with many options and features. With over 75 years experience, ETF supplies 95% of its ride internationally.

With a dedicated team of engineers who install the rides globally, the company's rides contain a modern connection in order to help clients with operational and maintenance questions by connecting to the vehicle from ETF's home base, helping to cut costs and downtime.

ETF Ride Systems has installed a number of dark rides this year in various parts of the world, including SpongeBob's Crazy Carnival Ride at Circus Circus in Las Vegas.

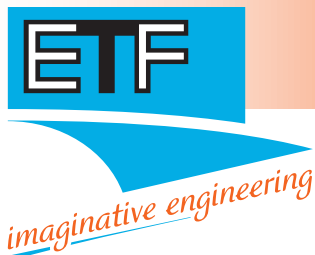
SpongeBob's Crazy Carnival Ride is an interactive dark ride featuring the company's trusted trackless Mystic Mover vehicles and ride system technology. The first of its kind themed-interactive ride features SpongeBob SquarePants and his friends, complete with zany antics, competitive game play and hijinks from the characters of the beloved Nickelodeon series. ETF's Mystic Mover

vehicles were supplied via Sally Dark Rides, while ETF is responsible for the complete trackless ride system. The ride contains 15 scenes, each with interactive targets. The ride experience begins as Mr. Krabs invites guests to try out his carnival games before his rival, Plankton, comes up with an evil plan.

There are more projects to follow this year, including a unique ride to be installed at Six Flags Qiddiya City in the Middle East named The Enchanted Greenhouse. Designed and manufactured by a consortium between Jora Vision and Alterface. The story of the ride hasn't yet been revealed, but is influenced by the local culture and region. The ride contains 12 ETF vehicles and will utilise animatronics, 14 multimedia projectors and a new effect that has never been seen in an interactive dark ride before. The ride goes beyond a traditional competitive shooting interactive ride; and is instead a journey that encourages cooperation between guests to discover the magical biosphere around them. Each ride vehicle will work together to change the environment, like changing colours, influencing behaviours and illuminating creatures.



Cadbury Chocolate Quest ETF Multi Mover



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Bold Move Nation

Established in early 2021 by Benoit Cornet and Anja D'Hondt, the company's headquarters are located in the heart of Europe in Brussels (Belgium), with satellite offices in Paris, Cologne, and Utrecht.

BoldMove Nation operates internationally, with local representation and a deep understanding of the local culture. The company has recently completed a project at regional attraction Le PAL in the French Auvergne region. The management team were eager to start the visitor experience at the queue line by using the beautiful Nordic pavilions leading up to the boarding platform of their new Fjord Explorer water ride.

The BoldMove team developed a story to be explored by the guests, rather than imposing something on them. Their personal imagination is triggered by their visual perceptions, merely helping them discover what is going on and how the story unfolds.

The concept allows for a fun experience throughout the entire queue line and is independent of waiting times. When it is less crowded, visitors will experience the different rooms in a consecutive story, but if it gets busier they enjoy more time to explore each room individually as it includes many items and clues.

During this 'untold story' that gradually unfolds, visitors explore the Captain's workplace up to the boarding platform. There are no screens with texts or explanations, which is rather refreshing and overcomes language barriers for international visitors. The Captain is not present, but visitors can see traces of him and his work during the entire queue line – which becomes an experience in itself.

BoldMove provided the 3D concept, schematic and detailed design for the entire queue line experience, detailing every corner and all specific props. Additionally, the team orchestrated all AV and developed the media content for the reception area and the control room.

Attentive guests can discover little Easter eggs in the media that reference the Champi'Folies attraction, the family dark ride which opened last year in the park based on BoldMove's concept and themed design.

The Champi' Folies dark ride, was awarded an IAAPA Brass Ring among other international awards and has been a huge success for the park.

"We chose this ride as we wanted to offer a new kind of attraction to our visitors," Arnaud Bennet, CEO of Le



PAL explains. "Champi'Folies is a true family experience that can be played between young children, parents, and even grandparents. This type of ride can usually only be found in the big parks, so we are pleased to offer this in a medium park to complement our offering."

The company's family dark ride products range from small and compact rides like Smash & Reload to larger ones like Fusion and Double Down.

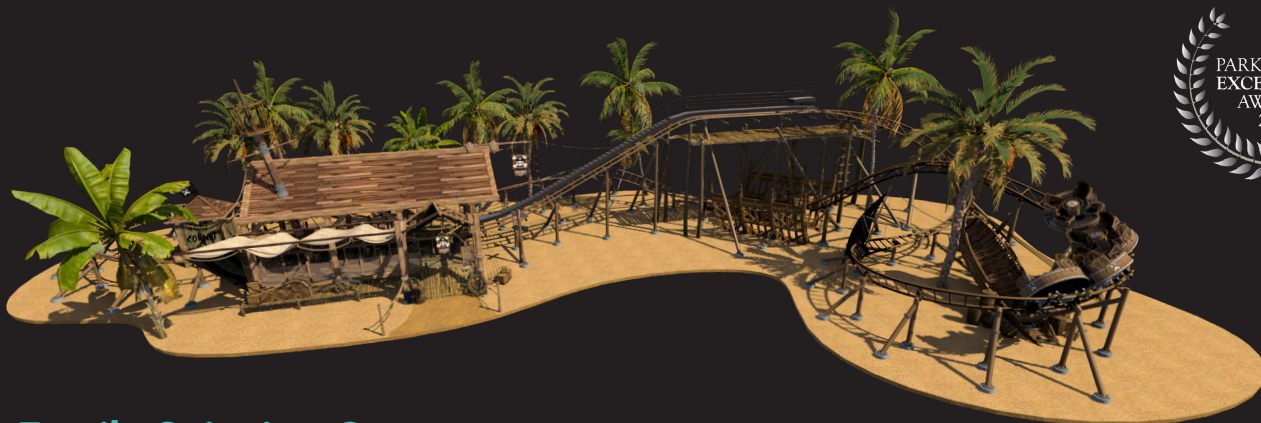
These can be customised to (re)fit an existing building so no extra construction needs to take place. The Spinfinity Coaster comes in two models and can be very easily installed with their compact layouts.

"Our dark ride section can also fit a building as we can adjust track height and layout," D'Hondt says. "For FECs and small parks, we have walkthrough solutions like Raptor Expedition and WaterSliderVR, which offer fun immersive family experiences and can complement existing attractions, generating extra income."

The company developed proprietary IPs like TooMush and Voodoo Festival that can be used in its attractions and rides, both on the media side of things and the physical theming. D'Hondt elaborates: "Our creative team also works with existing characters or can turn a park mascot into a fun IP with a complete universe. This can be completed with merchandising to extend the fun and increase the park's revenue."

"For our family coasters, we work with themes that resonate with the visitors and fit the park areas, but give it a special touch so it is more unique and memorable. We always look at the family perspective and make sure stories and IPs are fun for everyone."

SPINFINITY COASTER



Family Spinning Coaster

- Designed for maximum social interaction.
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- Customizable in theming and layout (indoor/outdoor).

**BOLD
MOVE
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RDC is recognised as the leading bumper car manufacturer in the United States. The company's engineering and technical expertise spans over 30 years. RDC manufactures and designs bumper cars and only bumper cars to clients in over 44 states and over 28 international countries.

Over the past 18 months (post pandemic), RDC has seen a surge in demand in the international marketplace. Due in part, to pent-up family entertainment demand and the need for owners to invest capital in new ride systems.

"By far, our preferred customer choice is RDC's patented Neoprene covered, Krazee Wh!rl bumper cars paired with our patented electric floor platform." Tami Dean, RDC General Manager, explains. "We have scores of owner/operator feedback over the years that tell us our bumper cars were selected due to competitive pricing, durable construction, simplicity, minimal staffing and low maintenance."

In the last 12 months, RDC has installed its Krazee Wh!rl bumper cars along with its patented electric floor platform in Australia, Philippines, South Africa, New Zealand, and India.

Bumper cars are popular all over the world and appeal to a wide audience segment. Across the world, whether in Kansas City or Manila, parents or caregivers can battle and bump their kids, No language barrier or instructions needed.

RDC's bumper cars appeal mostly to indoor entertainment centres such as FEC venues, bowling centres and roller rinks. "After the pandemic, we found that owners/operators are seeking new ride systems that balance the thrill/fun aspect for their patrons at an affordable investment level." Dean says.

"Most of our indoor owners/operators are keenly aware that space is a premium concern. They want to optimise existing floor space with a small footprint that requires only one operator in order to reduce labour cost. RDC is fortunate that our bumper car platforms have proven to deliver a profitable revenue stream. We have found that most owners report amortising RDC's ride systems within the first year.

Ron Mroz, TEEG, Group Product Team Lead agrees, echoing Dean's comments on client expectations, and is pleased to report that RDC really delivered.

"As a leading provider of entertainment solutions, we have had the pleasure of working closely with Tami and the RDC team to bring the joy of bumper cars to our guests. Their dedication to quality is unparalleled, ensuring that every product they deliver meets the highest standards of safety and excitement.

"Our partnership with RDC has been instrumental in our recent growth and demonstrated success. Their commitment to excellence and their proactive approach to addressing our needs have made them an invaluable partner. The unique design and robust construction of their attraction have consistently impressed both our team and our guests, making them a standout choice in the industry. RDC is a trusted and reliable partner to TEEG with their aligned dedication to deliver memorable experiences."

RDC bumper cars are known for their simplicity. As with modern cars, the more 'bells and whistles,' the more things can go wrong, which leads to added expense. "We tend not to design untested or unnecessary 'bells and whistles' at an owner's expense," Dean explains.

RDC also provides clients with affordable backdrops for any themed attraction venue. While the company reveres tradition, it's also not afraid of innovation, introducing a new line of LED illuminated cars for the Krazee Wh!rl and Krazee Voltz line of products. The LED light systems are durable and can withstand the constant bumping, more so than conventional bulb lights. RDC also offers programmed systems that display an array of colours and flash synchronisation. Clients can also choose from over 30 bumper car colour schemes to suit their theming.

"Quality and reliability equal longevity and higher profits," says Dean. "RDC's biggest advantage within the industry is our unrivalled technical and design simplicity and our patent protected tubing. We are proud to say RDC cars are a maintenance dream for owners and operators. We understand our clients have made a substantial investment in our RDC bumper cars, and they readily see our competitive pricing is coupled with lower, long term maintenance costs." ■

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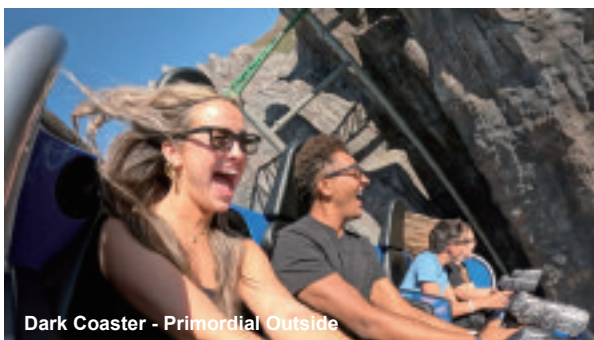
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Dark Coaster - Primordial

Beyond the Coaster: Primordial's Groundbreaking Adventure



Dark Coaster - Primordial Outside

In a world where theme park attractions continually vie for the title of "most thrilling" or "most immersive," Lagoon Park in Salt Lake City has set a new standard with its latest masterpiece, Primordial. This groundbreaking hybrid roller coaster and interactive dark ride has quickly become a must-visit for thrill-seekers and families alike. Not only has Primordial captured the imagination of park-goers, but it also claimed the coveted #1 spot in the USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards 2024 for Best New Theme Park Attraction—a testament to its innovative design and unparalleled experience.

A New Era of Themed Entertainment

At first glance, Primordial might seem like just another roller coaster nestled within the scenic landscape of Lagoon Park. However, what lies within its 6,600sqm and three levels is a transformative ride that seamlessly blends the adrenaline rush of a coaster with the immersive narrative experience of a dark ride. This unique combination elevates Primordial far beyond the typical theme park attraction, offering a 4.5-minute journey that engages all the senses.

The ride begins in the mythical Dolomite Mountains, where guests embark on a quest to restore harmony in Queen Azdra's kingdom by freeing the mystical creatures, Dragnor the dragon, and Astradir the owl. The adventure kicks off with a pre-show that sets the stage for the epic journey, followed by boarding tracked-based trains equipped with purpose-designed blasters. These aren't just any blasters—these are integrated into the lap bar, allowing riders to engage with interactive scenes while withstanding the ride's twists, turns, and drops.

Innovation in Every Turn

What truly sets Primordial apart from other attractions is its dynamic narrative and replayability. Unlike conventional rides that offer the same experience every time, Primordial boasts six possible endings, thanks to its innovative design that includes three mechanical effects—a vertical drop, a forward slide, and a backward slide—paired with two different media contents for each effect. This creates a ride experience that is not only varied but also encourages guests to return multiple times to explore all possible outcomes.

This replayability is further enhanced by the ride's competitive edge. As riders navigate through the themed media-based scenes, their performance is tracked, and they are assigned tasks such as liberating Dragnor or Astradir. The ride culminates in a 360° screen battle, where media and vehicle rotation are synchronised to deliver an intense and thrilling climax. Once the ride is over, guests can see their scores and rankings, adding an element of competition that compels them to ride again and improve their performance.

The mechanical design of Primordial is also clever and innovative. The ride's multiple paths not only offer unique experiences but also improve throughput. The fork-in-the-road concept allows the ride to handle large numbers of riders efficiently by keeping one track active while another resets, thus minimising wait times and enhancing the overall experience.

A Collaborative Triumph

The creation of Primordial was a monumental effort involving some of the most innovative minds in the industry. Lagoon Park played a significant role, coordinating with over 50 Utah contractors and local suppliers, making sure that 75% of the ride's components were sourced locally. This not only fostered a sense of community involvement but also ensured that the ride was built to the exacting standards required to deliver such a groundbreaking experience.

Triotech, global leader in interactive attractions, oversaw the entire project, managing everything from the ride system and interactivity to the development of media content. ART Engineering was responsible for the construction of the coaster and vehicles, ensuring that every element met the highest standards of quality and safety.

Setting a New Benchmark

Primordial has not only raised the bar for regional theme parks but has also redefined what a hybrid ride can achieve. Its innovative blend of a roller coaster and dark ride offers something for everyone—thrill-seekers, storytelling enthusiasts, and gamers alike. By addressing the individual limitations of each ride type, Primordial creates a more universally appealing experience that is both exciting and engaging.

The ride's modular design also allows for easy updates, meaning that Primordial can evolve with the industry, incorporating new technologies and content to keep the experience fresh and exciting for years to come. This adaptability is crucial in today's fast-paced entertainment landscape, where audiences are always looking for the next big thing.

A Lasting Impact

For Lagoon Park, Primordial represents more than just a new attraction; it's a statement of intent. By investing in such an innovative ride, the park has positioned itself as a leader in the regional theme park industry, capable of delivering experiences on par with the world's most famous destinations parks. This not only enhances its reputation but also ensures that it will continue to attract and retain visitors, driving repeat attendance and fostering a loyal customer base.

For visitors, especially those in the Salt Lake City region, Primordial offers a world-class experience without the need for long-distance travel. It's a ride that brings the magic of global theme parks to their doorstep, providing thrills, narrative depth, and interactive fun that can be enjoyed time and time again.

The Future of Theme Park Attractions

As the theme park industry continues to evolve, attractions like Primordial are paving the way for a new era of entertainment. By combining cutting-edge technology, innovative storytelling, and thrilling ride mechanics, Primordial sets a new benchmark for what a theme park attraction can be. It's not just about the ride itself, but the entire experience—from the moment you step into the Dolomite Mountains to the final exhilarating drop.

In the end, Primordial is more than just a ride; it's an adventure, a challenge, and an invitation to explore the unknown. It's a testament to what can be achieved when creativity, technology, and passion come together—a ride that will undoubtedly inspire future attractions and continue to captivate audiences for years to come. 🎢



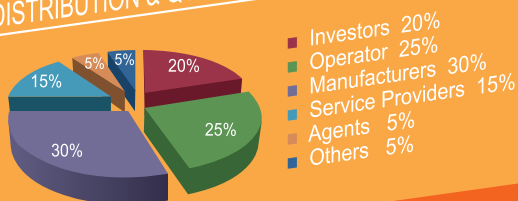
Dark Coaster - Primordial Outside

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Cloud Shuttle

Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland, China

By David Whitworth



The world has turned a full circle and a year's anniversary has been celebrated since a world's first attraction entered the theme park industry. This was the moment Vekoma Rides proudly celebrated the dawning of a new era and the creation of the Super Boomerang, the first of its kind across the globe.

The recipient of the milestone roller coaster is Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland in China. The ride is known as 'Cloud Shuttle' which is a multi-launch roller coaster and it officially opened to guests at the new theme park on 18 July.

"The Super Boomerang is designed to offer a unique combination of modern-age thrill ride elements, all in a compact, narrow space," explains Carin Davits, PR at Vekoma Rides.

"The ride features multiple launch sections, a thrilling vertical spike at 52.5-metres (172ft) height with a maximum speed of 95km/h (59mph). Cloud Shuttle has a revolutionary forward / backward concept along with vertical drops, four inversions, and 10 airtime elements - all action packed in this compact design. The Super Boomerang brings Vekoma Rides' successful boomerang concept to new levels of excitement and thrills to a wide demographics, with the rider height restriction of 1.2m (3ft11)."

Vekoma Rides use its MK1101 train system for Cloud Shuttle, which sees passengers sat in six carriages made up of 24 seats. The Super Boomerang spec model reaches a capacity of 800pph. Vekoma Rides explains that to obtain an unobstructed ride experience, the vehicle has a lapbar-only restraint system with a flexible

vest. Furthermore, the ride uses the state-of-the-art LSM launch system, which is the most maintenance-friendly driving system available in the market.

Cloud Shuttle's cutting-edge technology features a triple LSM launch through station plus two LSM boosts. There is a forwards LSM launch max of 40km/h (25mph), a backwards LSM launch max of 76km/h (47mph), a 45-metre (128ft) vertical free fall with three seconds of zero gravity. Its final launch hurtles riders on a forward LSM launch towards 95km/h (59mph).

Cloud Shuttle covers a track length of 436-metres (1431ft), pulling up to 4.0 G-Force.

When entering the park, you can see in the distance the distinctive yellow track as it towers above Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland. And once you get closer to the ride you see that Cloud Shuttle is dominated by a tall red tower, which the ride hooks onto - creating an iconic appearance across the whole of the park. It is also crucial to the excitement of the ride as the eye-catching tower is the anchor that enables daring riders a dose of forward and backward thrust. Cloud Shuttle propels riders forwards and then backwards to generate enough power to launch them over its course of thrilling inversions featuring a backwards inversion element with great hang time. The ride continues through twists, turns and loops to rise up its striking vertical spike before being plummeted back down at a thrilling speed and sent on the same course, only backwards, making for a novel and enthralling journey. This back-and-forth element brings a welcome freshness to the theme park industry.



Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland



Benjamin Bloemendaal, chief designer at Vekoma Rides who has over a decade of experience in designing the likes of top tier roller coasters such as Fønix, F.L.Y., Lech Coaster, Abyssus and many other Vekoma Rides roller coasters, further explains the concept of the Super Boomerang.

“The Super Boomerang was designed as a spiritual successor to both the classic Boomerang and the GIB, using a sit-down vehicle like the former, but having the stature of the latter. According to our present-day design philosophy, the new track design was also to sport more variation in ride elements, while focusing on airtime and hangtime rather than downforce.”

The Super Boomerang is not only a vibrant new ride concept but is a great fit for theme parks and amusement parks due to its economical use of space, as Bloemendaal emphasises: “Other key drivers to the final design include a unique and iconic aesthetic and a footprint that could be easily integrated in different park plans. These parameters, combined with more energy (i.e. increased train speed) and airtime-focused track elements, lead to a long-stretched, slender design rather than the traditional square base area.

“Additionally, we opted for a maintenance-free LSM drive to avoid the complex hoisting and catching mechanisms from the days of old. This choice does not only improve reliability and reduce maintenance cost, but it also provides for a more dynamic ride experience and a higher single-train throughput.”

The impressive design and technological aspect of the Super Boomerang model has been deservedly acknowledged, with Vekoma Rides being awarded with the Asia Attractions Golden

Crown Award for ‘Outstanding Roller Coasters Supplier (International)’ for Super Boomerang. “We are very proud of this great achievement and congratulations to the Fantawild Group with the successful opening of the Xuzhou Fantawild Wonderland,” stated Vekoma Rides at the awards ceremony.

One year on from Vekoma Rides’ first Super Boomerang opening in China, the second model will soon be heading to the USA at Six Flags Great Adventure in New Jersey. The ride will be themed to the popular DC Comics character ‘The Flash’ with the roller coaster known as ‘The Flash: Vertical Velocity’. The ride will coincide with the park’s 50th anniversary during the 2024 season and will be Great Adventure’s 15th roller coaster.

Vekoma Rides has produced a roller coaster model for the modern era to which its riders can enjoy a captivating odyssey onboard Cloud Shuttle in China and soon, The Flash: Vertical Velocity in the US. 📍





Philip Hernandez, Haunted Attraction Network

Ahead of the seasonal spooky season, InterPark's Editor, *Beth Whitaker* sits down with Haunted Attraction Network's *Philip Hernandez* to take a closer look at how he has grown the network into the leading resource for all things spooky and what he loves the most about working in the industry.

Tell me a bit more about the Haunted Attraction Network?

Now in its 11th year, the Haunted Attraction Network has become the leading news resource for the haunted attraction industry. My passion for Halloween started early, and during middle school, I began exploring journalism and content creation through a media magnet programme. These interests continued to develop as I grew older, and in college, I turned my home into a haunt that became so popular, we eventually had to rent a commercial space!

However, I quickly realised I had no idea what I was doing with the haunt, and there were few resources available to guide me. The event grew too big to manage, and after relocating, I found myself with a 'free' year. That downtime allowed me to merge my love for haunted houses with my content creation skills, leading to the creation of the Haunted Attraction Network. It started as a podcast where I asked industry experts the questions I wish I'd known when running my event.

Over the years, the network expanded into a blog, resource library, and even a print magazine. My focus gradually shifted from educational content to news coverage as haunted houses began hitting the mainstream, and educational resources became more

accessible. I noticed a lack of news-based coverage in the industry and felt that was where I could make the most impact.

In 2021, we made another shift—this time to short-form video. The decision was driven partly by audience trends and partly by the fact that short-form videos are an effective way to spread the word about haunts, which is incredibly valuable to the industry. This transition marked a turning point for us. In 2023, we received 90 million views during the fall season, and our work was featured on NBC's California Live, Fox 2 Detroit, and even on national radio with Marketplace.

What is it about haunted attractions that you love so much?

Fear, love, surprise, comedy—haunted houses are themed attractions that allow us to engage with emotions we don't typically explore in such a fantastical way. There's something magical about crafting an environment where you can play with fear, anticipation, and excitement, all while telling a compelling story. Haunted attractions are a unique form of live entertainment, blending elements of theatre, art, and interaction in a way that nothing else can. Seeing guests react—whether it's a scream, a laugh, or a look of awe—makes all the hard work worthwhile. I love how haunts can tap into a wide range of emotions and leave a lasting impact on those who experience them.

What have been some of your career highlights?

Over the years, I've had the privilege of working alongside some of the most respected names in the haunted attraction industry. Collaborating with haunt legends on various projects—whether through interviews, events, or behind-the-scenes content—has been both educational and deeply inspiring. Receiving recognition from peers and industry organisations for my work with the Haunted Attraction Network has been incredibly humbling and gratifying. Knowing that the content we create is valued by the community and positively impacts the industry is a source of great pride.

In 2019, I had the incredible opportunity to travel the world and compare haunted attractions in different countries. That was an unforgettable experience, and it turned out to be essential documentation just before the pandemic hit.

In 2023, I was honoured to be asked by the Haunted Attraction Association to produce the OSCARES, the annual awards ceremony for the haunted attraction industry.

Do you have a favourite haunted attraction?

Choosing a favourite haunted attraction is incredibly tough because each one offers something unique and memorable. Each scare is unique, and each guest has different needs from a haunt. However, if I had to pick one, I would say Halloween Horror Nights holds a special place for me. The event also holds a personal significance for me because it was one of the first major haunts I experienced on a large scale, and it really opened my eyes to the possibilities within the haunted attraction industry.

Which discontinued haunted attraction do you miss the most?

The discontinued haunted attraction I miss the most is Queen Mary's Dark Harbor in Long Beach, California. Dark Harbor had a unique atmosphere and setting that made it truly special. The fact that it was set on an actual historic ship, with its own real-life ghost stories and creepy history, added a layer of authenticity that you just can't replicate. Each maze was tied to a specific ghost or legend associated with the Queen Mary, which gave the entire event a cohesive and eerie narrative. The mazes themselves were incredibly detailed, often taking advantage of the ship's natural architecture and tight, claustrophobic spaces to enhance the scares.

But it wasn't just the mazes—the whole event was an experience. The roaming characters, the live shows, the themed bars, and the overall vibe were unlike anything else. It was the kind of event where you could spend hours just soaking in the atmosphere, interacting with the characters, and enjoying the spooky surroundings.

Dark Harbor was also known for its creativity and willingness to experiment. They weren't afraid to try new things or push boundaries, which made each year feel fresh and exciting.

Dark Harbor is returning this year, produced this time by 13th Floor Entertainment Group.

Which parks / attractions haunt the best in your opinion?

Again, best is relative to the context of the area, but here are my thoughts on some popular attractions.

Hersheypark's Dark Nights is relatively new to the scene but has quickly made a name for itself. The park's commitment to storytelling and creating a cohesive, immersive experience is impressive, especially for a younger event. Hersheypark blends its charming, family-friendly environment with some genuinely creepy and well-crafted haunted attractions.

The quality of the haunts, the attention to detail, and the overall guest experience are top-notch.

Universal Orlando's Halloween Horror Nights (HHN) is the largest Halloween event in the world, and likely the most profitable. The event is massive, and although the quality has slipped recently, it remains the 'brand name' for haunted attractions. The combination of big-budget production values, iconic horror IPs, and a vibrant atmosphere makes HHN a force in the industry.

Netherworld Haunted House in Atlanta, Georgia isn't a theme park, but it's one of the most iconic and well-regarded haunted attractions in the United States. It's consistently ranked as one of the best haunts in the country due to its elaborate sets, storytelling, and custom-made animatronics. Netherworld is known for its original themes and storylines that change every year, keeping things fresh for repeat visitors. The haunt also excels in its use of special effects and animatronics, creating a truly immersive and terrifying experience. It's a must-visit for any serious haunt enthusiast.

Ultimately, the best haunts are the ones that not only scare but also tell a story and create an experience that guests will remember long after the Halloween season is over.

Who is the best supervillain of all time?

The Joker from the Batman series.

His unpredictability, his chaotic nature, and his deep psychological complexity make him a classic. Unlike other supervillains who might have grandiose plans for world domination or vast armies at their disposal, The Joker is terrifying because he thrives on chaos and has no clear motive other than to spread fear and madness. His lack of a moral compass and his willingness to do anything, no matter how horrific, makes him incredibly frightening.

What significant changes in the haunted attractions sector have you seen in recent years?

Focus on Storytelling and Themed Experiences

There's been a noticeable trend toward deeper storytelling within haunted attractions. Rather than relying solely on jump scares and gore, many haunts are now crafting intricate narratives that unfold as guests move through the attraction. This shift allows for a more immersive experience where visitors are not just passively observing but actively participating in the story (we're giving guests a role to play). This trend is particularly evident in attractions like *Sleep No More* in New York or *Delusion* in Los Angeles, where guests play a role in the unfolding drama.

Personalisation and Interactivity

Modern haunts are increasingly focused on personalising the experience for guests; this also happens to be one of the largest advantages independent haunts have over theme parks. Independent haunts have the time to play with guests. This can range from allowing visitors to choose different paths or endings within a haunt to more intimate interactions with actors. This trend toward interactivity is all about making the experience feel unique and tailored to each visitor, which is a significant evolution from the more traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Blending Haunts with Escape Rooms and Interactive Theater

The line between haunted attractions, escape rooms, and interactive theatre has become increasingly blurred. Many haunts are incorporating elements of escape rooms—such as puzzles and tasks that guests must solve to progress—into their experiences. This blending of genres creates a more engaging and challenging environment, where fear is



Philip Hernandez after receiving the Silver YouTube Award

combined with the mental stimulation of problem-solving. Interactive theatre elements, where guests are part of the story and interact with characters, are also becoming more common, adding depth and narrative complexity to the haunt experience.

Themed Bars and Social Spaces

Another trend is the addition of themed bars and social spaces within or adjacent to haunted attractions. These areas allow guests to extend their experience by immersing themselves in the haunt's theme before or after going through the main attraction. It's also a way for haunts to generate additional revenue while enhancing the overall experience. These spaces often feature themed drinks, decor, and sometimes even performances that tie into the haunt's narrative, making the entire evening a more cohesive and memorable event.

Smaller, More Intimate Experiences

There's also been a rise in smaller, more intimate haunted attractions. Again, this allows independent attractions to target markets that the large theme parks cannot serve. These experiences often cater to smaller groups and focus on creating a more personal and intense experience.

Year-Round Haunted Attractions

There's been a trend toward year-round haunted attractions, particularly in entertainment hubs like Las Vegas. They may operate differently than during the Halloween season but these haunts cater to the growing demand for horror experiences outside the traditional Halloween season. It's a reflection of how horror and haunt culture have become more mainstream, with a fan base that is eager to experience scares any time of the year.

Rise of Home Haunters and DIY Culture

The DIY culture among home haunters has grown significantly, fuelled by the accessibility of information online and increasing access to supply (Home Depot / Spirit Halloween). Many enthusiasts are now able to create high-quality home haunts thanks to the proliferation of tutorials, forums, and educational content available on platforms like YouTube. This trend is expanding the market by encouraging more people to participate in Halloween decorating and haunt creation, even at a small scale.

Emphasis on Upsells and Premium Experiences

Upsells are on the rise. This includes things like VIP tours, personalised experiences, and additional attractions like speakeasy-style bars or interactive elements. These upsells are becoming more common as haunts look for ways to increase revenue and offer unique experiences that differentiate them from competitors.

What do you love most about working on Haunted Attraction Network? And what do you find the most challenging aspect?

Haunted attractions are such a unique blend of art, performance, and storytelling, and being able to explore, document, and share these experiences is incredibly rewarding. I'm constantly inspired by the innovation and dedication of haunt creators, and I love being able to showcase their work and help them reach a broader audience. The thrill of discovering new attractions, learning about the latest trends, and seeing how the industry evolves keeps the work exciting and fresh for me.

On the flip side, the toughest and most challenging aspect is definitely the sheer volume of work and the intensity of the haunt season. The months leading up to Halloween are incredibly busy, with so many events, attractions, and developments happening all at once. Keeping up with everything, producing content consistently, and making sure I'm covering all the bases can be overwhelming at times. Balancing the workload while ensuring that each piece of content is high-quality and provides value to both the industry and the audience is a constant challenge. Plus, the physical toll of travelling, late nights, and non-stop activity can be exhausting.

Who do you most admire in the industry and why?

The late Robbi Lepre was a beacon for the industry. She was a bridge between the theme park world (Busch Gardens) and the independent attractions that is sorely missed. Her ability to mentor and connect people was unparalleled. Beyond that, I admire all the folks who volunteer with the haunted attraction association. It's essential that we as an industry continue to gather, discuss, learn, and grow.

What's the one thing people might not know about you?

I'm actually quite introverted. It might seem surprising given the nature of my work, which involves a lot of travel, networking, and being in the spotlight at events. But at my core, I'm someone who really values quiet time and reflection. I think this introverted side of me actually helps in my work because it allows me to approach haunted attractions with a thoughtful, analytical mindset. It's also why I'm so passionate about storytelling and the details that make a haunt experience truly immersive—those are the things that resonate with me on a deeper level, beyond just the scares.

What are you looking forward to seeing at IAAPA Orlando?

I'm excited to see the advancements in technology that can be integrated into haunted attractions—things like immersive audio-visual effects, animatronics, and interactive elements. Every year, there's something new that pushes the boundaries of what we can do in a haunt, whether it's cutting-edge special effects, innovative ride concepts, or new ways to enhance the guest experience through technology.

I'm also looking forward to networking with other industry professionals and seeing what different vendors have to offer. It's a great place to exchange ideas, find inspiration, and discover products or concepts that can be applied to haunts. The energy at IAAPA is always high, and it's inspiring to be surrounded by so many creative and passionate people from all corners of the attractions industry. 📍

The power of **'black box thinking'** in the amusements industry

By Carl Hagemann, General Manager, ADIPS



You are probably familiar with the term 'black box thinking'. Popularised by writers such as Matthew Syed, this is a problem-solving approach that focuses on understanding the underlying causes of failures or problems, rather than simply laying the blame on individuals. In short, it is facing up to failure and learning lessons.

It draws inspiration from the concept of a black box in aviation, which records flight data and is used to investigate accidents, and its key principles include:

- *Learning from failures – instead of avoiding or hiding failures, black box thinking embraces them as opportunities for learning and improvement*
- *Systemic perspective – it looks at failures as a result of systemic issues rather than individual errors*
- *Data-driven approach – black box thinking relies on data and evidence to identify the root causes of problems*
- *Openness to feedback – it encourages a culture of openness and feedback, where people feel comfortable reporting mistakes and learning from them*
- *Continuous improvement – black box thinking is a mindset that promotes a culture of continuous learning and improvement*

The theory is that if your organisation, or industry, adopts a black box mindset, you can create a safer, more efficient and more innovative work environment.


In the last edition of InterPark, Marcus Brian, of Universal Verification, spoke about our collaboration on technical bulletins. In partnership with Universal Verification, ADIPS wants to lead the way in promoting the sharing of safety information across the amusements industry. We want amusements to embrace the black box thinking approach to safety.

The exchange of safety information across an industry can be a cornerstone of a robust and proactive safety culture. We have seen it in aviation, where the stakes are so high. Isn't it time we embedded such a culture in our industry, which must prioritise the safety of members of the public and those many thousands of people who work on the rides.

By fostering this collaboration and knowledge sharing, we can collectively identify emerging hazards, learn from best practices and ultimately create safer parks for all. As a safety practitioner, I have seen for myself how sharing safety information can also stimulate innovation and the development of new safety solutions. By analysing incident data and identifying common causes of accidents, it is possible to see areas where new technologies or processes could improve safety performance. We have the development of groundbreaking safety innovations through this more collaborative approach.

So, how can we achieve this 'black box thinking', collaborative philosophy for safety across our industry? Here are five things we can do for starters:

1. Support a positive mindset within our own organisations towards failures, such as safety breaches. These are opportunities to learn, not just for our own organisations but more widely. First and foremost, we need an industry-wide consensus that sees the sharing of safety information as more important than burying bad news. Lives are at stake here, so let's work together for the common good.
2. Share information, such as lessons learned, through industry-wide communication channels, such as newsletters, conferences and quality media outlets, such as InterPark Magazine!
3. Build networks in our industry of those involved in safety and health. We have committees such as the Health & Safety Executive-led FJAC meeting, and our own regular Safety Health Awareness Days (SHADs), which are all about networking and learning.
4. Invest in safety awareness training, such as the IOSH 'Safety' courses – Leading Safety, Managing Safety, and Working Safety – or the British Safety Council's Certificate in Health and Safety in the Workplace. Safety and health is a shared responsibility and awareness training helps to foster a more positive work culture in which conversations about safety breaches and the lessons learned are encouraged.
5. Take part in awards and recognition schemes, which are an effective way to promote good standards of safety and health. This is why we sponsor the Theme Park of the Year Award and the National Outdoor Events Association's Best Practice in Health & Safety Award. It's vital that we equate high quality with good safety. A park or event can only be an award winner if it looks after people while they are working or having fun.

ADIPS is keen to hear from parks about their safety experiences. This can be incidents learned from incidents, or safety best practices. Through channels such as newsletters and this column, we can together bring about continuous improvement in safety standards across our industry. 



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR CLOSURES!

By Dennis Spiegel

As the 2024 summer season draws to a close, theme parks across the nation and around the world are gearing up for their annual updates and changes. Among the most significant decisions these entertainment giants face is when and how to announce the retirement of beloved rides and attractions. While it may seem like a small detail in the grand scheme of park operations, the timing and manner of these announcements can have a profound impact on both guests and the park's overall experience.

Traditionally, theme parks have opted for a variety of strategies when it comes to announcing the retirement of rides. Some parks wait until the last minute, catching guests by surprise, while others choose to make announcements well in advance. The latter approach, though, is increasingly being recognized for its numerous benefits. Let's look at what some of these benefits mean.

Early closure announcements allow guests to push their visits around the attractions they want to experience one last time. For enthusiasts who may be travelling specifically to see a certain ride, knowing in advance that it will be retiring can help them schedule their visit earlier more effectively. This can create a sense of urgency and excitement, boosting park attendance before the attraction closes in a time of the season when the attraction needs a boost. This could come early

in the season to jump start attendance, or at the end of the season to pump attendance should the park be experiencing a softness in attendance like this season 2024.

When guests are given ample notice, parks can organise special farewell events that celebrate the history and memories associated with the retiring ride. Disney has done this quite successfully of late with removals and change overs like Splash Mountain. This can include divesting of exclusive merchandise through the creation of commemorative ceremonies, and themed events that honour the attraction's legacy.

Transparency about ride and attraction retirements helps manage guest expectations and reduces potential dissatisfaction. When guests are caught off guard by an unexpected closure, it can lead to frustration and disappointment. Advance notice ensures that visitors are prepared for changes and can make informed decisions about their visit. It will also quell the negativity we see so often on social media by the influencers and bloggers. It will definitely keep the chatter down and allow the park to manage the announcement in a manner they see fit.

As I said, announcing ride retirements early can be a strategic marketing move. It provides parks with an opportunity to generate buzz and media coverage



promotions. Just last week (mid-August) Cedar Point announced that they were not going to open the Top Thrill 2, which was highly anticipated for opening in the beginning of the 2024 season. Upon opening it operated for about 8 days, after which it was closed for engineering issues. After three plus months of closure it was determined to announce that the ride would not operate during the 2024 season and would re-open in 2025.

From my perspective this was the proper thing to do. People will not labour any longer under the hope of it opening this season... Time has a way of healing all wounds. People returning in 2025 will be excited and happy to see Top Thrill 2 open and will champion the decision to wait till it is ready for a full season.

Making sure the time is ideal to make such announcements requires careful consideration on the part of management. Generally, parks should aim to provide information at least six months in advance if they can. This type of timeframe strikes a balance between giving guests enough notice to plan their visits while avoiding the risk of long-term speculation that could detract from the excitement. Also allowing time to negate the always mounting rumours.

The decision to announce ride retirements early is not just about managing operational logistics; it's about respecting and valuing the guest experience. By being transparent and proactive, theme parks can enhance visitor satisfaction, celebrate the legacy of their attractions, and turn a challenging, possibly controversial change into an opportunity for positive engagement. As the industry continues to mature and evolve, embracing this approach may well become a standard in delivering exceptional and memorable experiences to the millions of guests we entertain each year. We know there are going to continue to be removals and replacement of rides and attractions. Let's make the most of these necessary adjustments with positive, not negative vibes! For your information there are quite a few closures coming on the horizon. Take a look at your upcoming inventory, you will be glad you did! 📺



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Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe

October 16 – 18

Leisure Japan 2024, Tokyo Big Sight – South Hall, Tokyo, JAPAN

Contact: TSO International Inc.
Tel: +81 3 5363 1701
Email: info@leisure-japan.jp
www.leisure-japan.jp/en/

October 24 – 26

China International Tourism And Leisure Industry Expo 2024, Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Centre, CHINA

Contact: China Attractions Expo
Tel: +44 (0) 161 6100022
Email: katie.w@chinaattractionsexpo.org
https://chinaattractionsexpo.org

November 6 – 7

Land Leisure And Tourism Show 2024, NEC, Pendigo Way, Birmingham, UK
Contact: Agriconnect
www.familyattractionexpo.co.uk

November 19 – 22 IP

IAAPA Expo Orlando, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida, USA
Contact: International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, 4155 West Taft Vineland Road, Orlando, Florida, USA
Tel: +1 321 319 7600
Fax: +1 321 319 7690
Email: iaapa@IAAPA.org
www.iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo



January 30 – February 1 2025

Atrax '25. 11th International Amusement – Attractions, Parks – Games and Sport Fields Industry Exhibition. Istanbul Expo Centre, Istanbul, TURKEY

Contact: Tureks International Fairs co.
Tel: +90 212 570 63 05
Email: nergis@tureksfuar.com.tr
https://atraxexpo.com/en/home/

January 14 – 16 2025

EAG 25, Entertainment, Attractions & Gaming International Expo, ExCel London, UK
Contact: EAG 29-30 Ely Place, London, EC1N 6TD, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 204502 6795
Email: sales@eagexpo.com
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February 19 – 21

IAAPI Amusement Expo, Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai, INDIA
Contact: IAAPI, 404, Shreya House, Pareira Hill Road, Off M V Road, Opp Gurnanak Petrol Pump, Andheri East, Mumbai 400099 Maharashtra, India

Tel: +91 22 2838 6829
Email: info@iaapi.org
www.iaapi.org/about-expo-2025

March 21 – 23

CAE Beijing 2025, China International Exhibition Centre, Shunyi New Venue, Beijing, CHINA

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